THE MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) One of the key functions of this Ministry is to preserve the ancient culture of the country. The Archaeological Survey of India undertakes excavations of histoncal sites and conservation of ancient monuments. The archaeological findings and excavated artifacts are rich sources to understand our ancient history and culture.

The Anthropological Survey of India, Kolkata and Indira Gandhi Rashtriya Manav Sangrahalaya, Bhopal are engaged in the study of the culture and lifestyle of the people of India from ancient times.

The Akademies under the Ministry of Culture are autonomous bodies which foster not only contemporary art forms and cultural expressions and literature but also encourage the study of ancient culture and tradition. The 7 Zonal Cultural Centres are primarily doing work in the area of folk and traditional art forms. The Scheme of financial support to tribal culture is yet another initiative to encourage ancient and traditional culture.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) Does not arise.

Conservation of National Monuments

3251. SHRI GIREESH KUMAR SANGHI: Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any policy for conservation of National Monuments;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Certain monuments are declared to be of national importance under the provisions of AM&ASR Act 1958. The Archaeological Survey of India is responsible for the protection, conservation, preservation and environmental development of such monuments.

(c) Does not arise.